

## -- Short Questions (3 Marks) --

1. Describe all three estates in which French society was divided in the 18th century!
2. Give a brief description of the third estate.
3. Give a brief description of the reign of terror led by Maximilien Robespierre.
4. What was the importance of the "Tennis Court Swearing" in the French Revolution?
5. Write three chief characteristic features of the constitution of 1791.
6. How was the taxation policy responsible for the French Revolution? Explain!
7. What were the causes for the empty treasury of France?
8. Describe the triangular slave trade between Europe, Africa and America.
9. What was the condition of women in France in the 18th century?
10. Why did king Louis XVI conclude to increase taxes? Assess any three reasons.
11. Describe the status of the nobles in France before the Revolution.
12. How did the peasants contribute to the outbreak of the French Revolution? Explain!

## -- Answers --

### (1) *Three Estates in 18th Century France Were:*

- **The First Estate** was the clergy, who were people, including priests, who ran both the Catholic church and some aspects of the country. In addition to keeping registers of births, deaths and marriages, the clergy also had the power to levy a 10% tax known as the tithe.
- **The Second Estate** consisted of the nobility of France, including members of the royal family, except for the King. Members of the Second Estate did not have to pay any taxes. They were also awarded special privileges, such as the wearing a sword and hunting. Like the clergy, they also collected taxes from the Third Estate.
- **The Third Estate** was made up of everyone else, from peasant farmers to the bourgeoisie – the wealthy business class. While the Second Estate was only 1% of the total population of France, the Third Estate was 96%, and had none of the rights and privileges of the other two estates.

(2) The Third Estate was the largest class but had no privileges. It included, artisans, city workers, peasants, lawyers, businessmen etc. Despite their number and contributions, they had to pay taxes directly and indirectly to the state.

(3) From 1793 to 1794, under Robespierre's lead, the Reign of Terror saw many people being put to death using the guillotine. This period saw a lot of fear as many, including King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette, were executed. The goal was to get rid of those seen as enemies of the Revolution.

(4) In 1789, when representatives of the Third Estate were not allowed into their usual meeting place, they went to a nearby tennis court. Here, they promised not to leave until they had written a new constitution for France. This event was a key moment in the beginning of the French Revolution.

**(5) *Some Of The Features of the Constitution of 1791 Were:***

- The Constitution of 1791 introduced a constitutional monarchy in France. While the king still had power, his actions were now guided and limited by the constitution, reducing his earlier absolute authority.
- It Limited the voting rights and it allowed only a small group of people, mainly the wealthier sections of society, to vote. This meant that only men who were above 25 years of age and paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a laborer's wage could vote.
- It ended feudalism, removing dues that peasants had to pay. It also took away the special rights and tax exemptions of the First (Clergy) and Second (Nobility) Estates.

(6) The French government levied taxes to cover the costs of an army, a judiciary, government departments, and universities. Only the third estate, which includes large businessmen, retailers, judges, attorneys, and others, The Third Estate also included peasants and artisans, landless labour, etc. They all were subjected to the taxes.

Tithes were a government-imposed tax on peasants that accounted for one-tenth of total agricultural production. Taille was a form of direct tax that all members of the third estate were required to pay. They were also subjected to a number of indirect taxes. The members of the third estate's lives were made more difficult as a result of this. Many of these tax measures contributed to the French Revolution.

Only the members of the third estate paid taxes to the state, which was one of the many reasons for the revolution. Members of the first and second estates were excluded from paying any king's taxes. The Church, too, received tithes from the peasants, and eventually, all members of the third estate were required to pay state taxes. These included a direct tax known as *taille*, as well as a host of indirect taxes imposed on daily items including salt and tobacco. The cost of funding state activities by taxation was solely borne by the third estate.

So these are the taxation policies responsible for the French Revolution.

### ***(7) Causes for the Empty Treasury of France Were:***

- Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France 🇫🇷.
- Under Louis XVI France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain independence. This further depleted the royal treasury of France.
- France had taken many loans and the growing interest made it harder to manage the money.

**(8)** During the late 17th and 18th centuries, European ships traveled to Africa to buy slaves with goods. These slaves were then taken to the Americas and sold. With the money from the slave sales, Europeans bought goods like sugar and cotton from the Americas and took them back to Europe to sell. This three-way journey of ships and goods gave it the name "triangular trade."

**(9)** Women in 18th century France had limited rights. They couldn't vote or hold many official positions. Most worked hard, either in fields or at home, and had little say in public matters. While they participated in and contributed to the Revolution, they still struggled for equal recognition and rights.

### ***(10) Some Of The Reasons For The Decision Of Louis XVI To Increase The Taxes Were:***

- The French treasury was almost empty due to long years of wars and expensive court life.
- To cover the cost of helping the thirteen American colonies gain their independence.
- The growing interest on borrowed money was putting extra strain on the finances.

(11) The nobles, part of the Second Estate, were among the richest in France. They had important roles in government and the military. They owned a lot of land and collected taxes from the people who lived on it. They were special because they didn't have to pay any of the taxes that the people of third estate had to do pay.

(12) Peasants, the majority in France, faced hard times. They had to pay heavy taxes and also give a part of what they produced to the nobles as rent. Frequent famines made life tougher. Their frustration with these burdens and unfair treatment built up over time. When they heard about ideas of freedom and equality, they wanted change. This widespread discontent among peasants played a big role in sparking the French Revolution.



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